

OPPORTUNITY

A Publication of the New Jersey Office of Economic Opportunity

In his Annual Message to the Legislature, Governor Hughes proposed:

"... strengthening the State's war against poverty which has set a standard of achievement for the entire country."

In his Budget message, Governor Hughes requested an increase in the State's participation in the war on poverty from \$200,000 for fiscal year 1966 to \$475,000 for fiscal year 1967. These funds would be available to communities to help meet the non-federal share of Economic Opportunity Act programs, to the State's Rural Youth Development Program, to the war against adult illiteracy, and other purposes.

Thrust On Medicare

Nearly 400 elderly poor have been hired by antipoverty agencies to help find other older people and enroll them for Medicare benefits.

NJOEO is working with the State Agricultural Extension Service to help register migrants and other seasonal agricultural workers throughout the State.

The objective of Operation Medicare Alert is to inform older persons about benefits available to them under the health insurance and other provisions of the Social Security amendments of 1965.

There are more than 200,000 eligible older persons in the State who either have not applied for any of the benefits available under Medicare, or for the specific benefits under the new amendments that would help offset the expense of doctors' bills.

These are the people that Community Action Program workers throughout the State are now trying to reach.

Of New Jersey's 650,000 persons who are 65 and over, more than half a million have received application cards from the Social Security Administration. More than 50,000 of them have not responded

There are at least another 100,000 persons 65 and over who are not registered with the Social Security Administration and who are in danger of receiving no Medicare benefits at all, unless they apply for them.

If you know anyone over 65 who has not registered, refer him to his district Social Security Office, his local post office, or to the nearest Antipoverty Agency.

CCAP Establishing Information Center

The Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty, headed by Walter Reuther, and directed by Richard Boone, formerly of OEO, is establishing a nationwide informational exchange among organizations combatting poverty.

The sole criterion for an organization to become enrolled is that the poor participate to a maximum degree in its administration.

CCAP is relying on 200 key spot-terers around the country to locate organizations which meet this requirement.

To date, 3,000 groups have been registered, with the hope that by spring another 3,000 will be enrolled.

Legal Service Plan

Partial funding was approved recently for a Legal Services Program proposed by NJOEO, to help find solutions for problems involving inadequate representation of New Jersey's poor.

Approval followed closely the Supreme Court's decision that indigent persons shall be represented by paid counsel.

The first component of the new Program provides for hiring professional staff to assist 1) the Governor's Committee on Poverty and the Law in carrying out its objectives and 2) CAPs in developing and implementing local legal service projects.

Governor Hughes established the Committee on Poverty and the Law last spring to survey the administration of justice, and substantive and administrative law, as they affect the poor. He said recently that he expects the Committee to take a leading role, with respect to the Court's decision, in proposing solutions for providing paid counsel for the indigent.

Subcommittees, organized under the guidance of Attorney General Arthur Sills, chairman of the Governor's Committee, already have prepared several preliminary studies of the availability of legal services for the indigent.

The second component of the Program is training for counsel who will be employed in the neighborhood law offices established by Community Action Agencies.

Training will be subcontracted to the Institute for Continuing Legal Education, which is planning a curriculum of 60 hours of instruction for 100 attorneys.

The Leadership Of The Poor

"With the Rutgers Intern Plan, we set out to prove that deprived persons have leadership qualities," said Bernard Rifkin, who for the past eight months, has been involved in a program to train men and women for executive roles in the war on poverty.

Last July, Rifkin, former director of Labor Education for the United Auto Workers, began a unique training project at Rutgers. He wanted to test the thesis that, with guidance and encouragement, disadvantaged men and women could be responsible leaders in "the opportunity profession."

Rifkin asked church, civil rights and labor leaders to propose candidates for the \$171,000 program.

These criteria were established: (1) candidates should have had some schooling; (2) they should have had some work experience; (3) they should have been involved in the labor and/or civil rights movement; and (4) they should have potential leadership ability. This group was screened and culled to a final 20, 16 men and 4 women.

The names of 174 men and women were proposed.

Under terms of the Intern plan, each candidate would serve in the program for one year and would receive \$5,000.

The interns first met in August at the State University. There, for two weeks they studied the details of the poverty program, on federal, state and local levels. The staff at Rutgers tried to provide each trainee, "a sense of expanding horizons".

After completing this phase of the program, interns were assigned to major urban and rural Community Action Programs across the State. Each was given a specific role in an ongoing program, in Head Start (Passaic), in work counseling (Trenton), in neighborhood organizing (Newark), and in migrant projects (Burlington County). In every case, the intern showed the capacity for growth and leadership the developers of the program had banked on.

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Bernard Rifkin leads Interns in discussion at Rutgers.

Bullitt Urges Test of Necessity

I am pleased at the Administration's demonstration of its conviction that the war against poverty must go forward and must be expanded throughout the nation. President Johnson's request for an increase of 17 per cent in appropriations under the Economic Opportunity Act, when coupled with his request for increased funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and other legislation, continues the Great Society's commitment to eradicate poverty in the face of our commitment in Viet Nam.

But unless we wish to see escalating conflict in our cities, we must do more. There is a rising tide of expectation among the poor — which we have done much to stimulate. This nation cannot now afford to mount only token efforts to meet their needs. We will need to do more and we will need to do it more effectively.

If we have the right tools and in sufficient quantity, I am confident we can do the job. The Community Action Programs, the State projects and other economic opportunity activities in New Jersey have passed beyond the point of initial organization and have mounted impressive programs. Approximately \$30,000,000 has been committed in this first year of operations, and growth in the second year would require approximately \$45,000,000 — an increase of 50 per cent.

Unfortunately, there is little likelihood that there can be any such increase in funding under the Economic Opportunity Act for New Jersey projects during the fiscal year beginning July 1. The President's requested increase will provide barely enough to fund existing programs on a year-round basis.

Several steps must, therefore, be taken. In the first place, this action of the President to restrain the pressures of inflation by asking for only modest increases in critical domestic programs will increase the responsibility of the state government, localities and private industry to carry a larger share of the burden of the war on poverty.

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John C. Bullitt, NJOEO director, urges CAPs to carefully consider anti-poverty priorities.

NNJCAP Using 'Area' Reps

The Northwest New Jersey Community Action Agency has begun to place area representatives in 15 different spots throughout Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex Counties.

"Our deprived families are scattered over such a wide rural area," said Jack Chapman [Photo 1], the Agency's executive director, "we had to develop a special person-to-person program."

The wide dispersion of population is one factor that contributes to the difficult problems of rural poverty. Furthermore, education among rural poor families is generally lower than among their urban counterparts, transportation facilities are frequently inadequate, and social services — if, indeed, there are any at all in rural neighborhoods — are exceedingly difficult to come by.

All of the Northwest Agency's representatives, chosen by Chapman, are non-professional people who come mostly from the economically disadvantaged group they serve. To help them to serve the poor better, they participated in a five-day training program conducted at the Agency's headquarters in Phillipsburg.

Among the subjects they studied were the Economic Opportunity Act and its amendments: the characteristics and needs of impoverished children, young people, adults and senior citizens; aids for combatting poverty; and the methods of collecting, compiling and understanding poverty data.

Each area representative will cover a territory of more than 100 road miles. He will contact disadvantaged families and individuals to help place them in the most appropriate anti-poverty program.

Chapman explained that the representatives will make a special effort to concentrate on the elderly poor, because the tri-county area has a particularly large number in that age group.

Finally, the representatives plan to consult with the established public and private social agencies in north-west New Jersey, including the Farmers Home Administration and the State Division of Employment Service.

Urban Housing Needs Studied

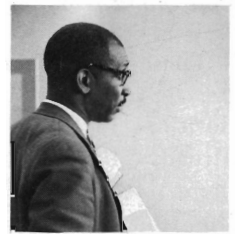
"The Bluestein Report", Kenneth Marshall [Photo 2], executive director of the Paterson Task Force for Community Action, said recently, "is a White Paper for everyone concerned with the housing needs of the urban poor."

In December, Marshall hired Mrs. Iris Bluestein, senior planner of the Paterson Planning Board, to survey all urban housing and housing-related proposals funded or pending throughout the United States under the Economic Opportunity Act.

According to Marshall no such survey had ever been attempted before. He said the study was needed to help the Paterson Task Force decide what action it should take in the area of urban housing.



1. Jack Chapman



3. Rev. Ercel Webb,
CAN-DO director.

2. Kenneth Marshall (fore-
ground) tells of new re-
port on housing for urban
poor in Paterson.



After 12 days, Mrs. Bluestein presented her 43-page report that includes a survey of all current OEO housing projects, as well as many specific recommendations for Paterson.

When looking at the national scene, Mrs. Bluestein said she found it hard to evaluate many of the programs because of their newness.

She was impressed by the few attempts she saw to use OEO funds along with monies from the Housing Act of 1965 to create non-profit corporations to build houses for low income families. She was distressed by a noticeable lack of work experience programs for training people in all aspects of urban housing, from construction to rehabilitation.

For Paterson, Mrs. Bluestein recommended the establishment of a Housing Program and Development Division under the Paterson Planning Board, which would write and/or organize programs in the following areas: 1) Non-Profit Housing Corporations; 2) Code Enforcement Techniques; 3) Work-Experience; 4) Techniques for Urban Agents; 5) Concerted Social Services; 6) Parks and Recreational Facilities; and 7) Financial and Health Education.

Mrs. Bluestein's report is available on request from the Task Force Office at 367 Broadway, Paterson.

The Neighborhood 'Rumble'

To help urban poor help themselves is the task of six neighborhood centers established six months ago by the Community and Neighborhood Development Organization (CAN-DO) of Jersey City.

To continue and expand that work, the Jersey City antipoverty agency hopes to apply new operational grants of \$1.7 million.

These funds will be used in all the centers to strengthen pre-school programs, remedial help for children in elementary schools, tutorial aid for junior high and high school students of disadvantaged families, referral services for youth and adults, and recruiting programs for the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

4. Milton Zatinsky, executive director, Middlesex CAP.



for an additional \$600,000 to set up similar centers in Perth Amboy, Woodbridge, and a mobile center that would service outlying municipalities.

Special Library for the Poor

Elizabeth anti-poverty officials are planning to provide some of the educational weapons needed by the poor by opening a special branch library in one of the four impoverished neighborhoods in the City.

If the experiment works, Community Action for Economic Opportunity in Elizabeth hopes there will be a branch library in each of the other poverty areas within a year.

"The Public Library in Elizabeth is far outside the poverty areas," CAFEO's Executive Director Thomas Highsmith, Jr. [Photo 5], said. "We felt we had to establish a special library for the 1,000 poor families in the Elizabethport section where they live," he explained.

Many of these people, he reported, still are struggling to speak English and to accommodate their needs, many of the books in the new library will be written in Spanish.

Selection of the titles will be made by anti-poverty block organizations in the area. The poor, themselves, already have indicated a desire to read Spanish history and literature, books about Cuba, Puerto Rico and Africa.

They have also said they want books and periodicals on child rearing, early childhood education, basic adult education, public health and civic government.

When established, the branch library will not make silence the rule of conduct. Nor will people simply be directed to a card catalogue.

Instead, shirtsleeved aides — persons from the same poverty neighborhood — will encourage borrowers to express their problems and interests and will help select appropriate books for them to read.

To start the library branch program, the Community Action for Economic Opportunity has applied for an OEO grant of \$76,255. Of that amount, \$17,000 is to be budgeted for the purchase of 5,000 books — 3,000 of them, especially for children.

CAFEO already has obtained 1,350 square feet of space for the branch library in a building owned by the Elizabeth Housing Authority.

Furthermore, an outright donation of \$18,000 has been contributed to the branch program by the Board of the City's Public Library. This money has been earmarked for the salaries of two professional librarians, who will train five disadvantaged persons as aides at the branch library.

The City has agreed to waive Civil Service requirements so the aides can do library work without having to take degrees in library science.



5. Thomas Highsmith, Jr., CAFEO's executive director.

Jersey City's six neighborhood centers were organized in poverty areas after neighborhood organizing councils — composed of poor persons — outlined plans and recommended what the centers should accomplish.

"We believe the neighborhood councils and centers offer a direct line to the people of the community and provide for maximum feasible participation of the poor," Rev. Ercel Webb [Photo 3], executive director of CAN-DO, said recently.

Presently, the staff of each center includes a director, an organizer and a secretary, all of whom work full time, in serving the needs of approximately 15,000 disadvantaged persons. They are helped by neighborhood workers, who work as public health and employment aides.

"We hope that the centers will become permanent community institutions, serving the people much in the same way as do the schools, hospitals, police stations and corner drugstores," Rev. Webb said.

Middlesex Multi-Service Unit

A major offensive against poverty in Middlesex County will be launched soon when a multi-service center for the poor is established in New Brunswick.

The Middlesex County Economic Opportunities Corporation has asked for nearly \$150,000 to organize the first center to provide the poor with legal aid, referral services to other agencies, education and enrichment, health, employment counseling, day care, and citizenship education.

Milton Zatinsky [Photo 4], executive director of EOC, said the center in New Brunswick will provide services not now being rendered by any other agency; turn people who need help to agencies now offering it and stimulate local organizations to provide more services for the poor.

Zatinsky said if the New Brunswick Multi-Service Center operates successfully, Middlesex EOC will apply



Ronald
Perrin

MOP Ups Plans

An ambitious series of programs to help New Jersey's migrant and seasonal agricultural workers is expected to get underway this year.

All of the proposals, many of them pending approval by OEO in Washington, have been worked out with Ronald Perrin, new director of the State's Migrant Opportunity Program, under NJOEO.

Together, they represent one of the most concerted efforts in the country to lift migrants out of the cycle of poverty by attacking the combined problems of education, housing, day care, sanitation, vocational rehabilitation, employment and health.

*In Vineland, the Board of Education would provide 1,500 youth and adult migrant and seasonal agricultural workers with basic education and vocational training.

*The Bureau of Children's Services of the State Department of Institutions and Agencies proposes to operate 14 day care centers in rural areas of the State. Some would be year round and others temporary.

*The American Friends Service Committee would administer a four-part program dealing with community development and counter seasonal employment for seasonal agricultural workers.

*In Fairton Township, several education programs would be operated, some of them offering basic education in temporary Tent Schools in migrant camp sites. Others would provide year round basic education for youth and adults.

*The Bureau of Migrant Labor proposes to hire supplementary OEO sanitarians to do work camp inspections and water samplings.

*A proposal that has been submitted and approved verbally would provide for the hiring of a housing coordinator, who would survey the housing needs of migrants. The survey would provide the foundation for the development of new, centralized housing for migrants and seasonal agricultural workers in southern New Jersey.

*An Extension Service proposal would offer home management and other services in the migrant camps.

In a memorandum to the staff of NJOEO, Director Bullitt stated:

"I wish particularly to call your attention to Article VII of Governor Hughes' Executive Order 21—Code of Fair Practices—which makes it clear that, henceforward,

'All education, counseling, and vocational guidance programs and all apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs of State agencies, or in which State agencies participate . . . shall be conducted . . . *with special attention to the problems of culturally deprived, educationally handicapped, or economically disadvantaged persons.*'

"Article VII goes on to say,

'Expansion of training opportunities under these programs shall also be encouraged with a view toward involving *larger numbers of participants from those segments of the labor force where the need for upgrading levels of skill is greatest.*'

"Article VII is thus further evidence of the Governor's determination that all of the resources of State government be brought to bear on the least advantaged in our population. It is incumbent on this Office to assure that the Governor's mandate is fully carried out."

Training Programs Underway

The New Jersey Community Action Training Institute this month inaugurated five training programs for local anti-poverty agencies in Monmouth County, Middlesex, Elizabeth, Atlantic-Cape May and Newark.

Persons at the Institute are in contact with every other CAP in the state and are hopeful that many more requests for programs, designed to better equip personnel to fight the war on poverty, will be forthcoming in the future.

Voting members of the Institute, located in Trenton, selected a Board of Trustees on February 7 which decided immediately to review applications for individual training programs proposed by Community Action Agencies.

According to Barry Passett, director of the Institute, training will be tailored to fit the needs of local anti-poverty programs. He urged program directors to submit proposed training projects as soon as possible.

Passett said that, generally, the Institute will administer funding of the training programs, coordinate them with others throughout the State and, finally, evaluate them so that other projects may benefit from accumulated experience.

Much of the training, he said, will be conducted in the communities for which they are designed.

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These directors now are attempting to place interns in permanent positions in CAPs. Of the 20, four already have permanent assignments. Rifkin is confident that by the time the program terminates, practically all the others will have full time assignments in community organizations.

Each Friday, the interns meet at Rutgers for a day-long discussion and analysis of their work. During the evenings, all are involved in some program of schooling. Some attend night high school, some extension courses at Rutgers and others are involved in adult education programs.

Farewell, Welfare

The Blazer Coordinating Council of Youth Development in Newark is training 135 welfare recipients to help make them productive members of society.

The students are grown men and women. All are on welfare.

They volunteered for the program, because, as one woman participant said, "this is our last chance to be skilled and in later days it will help us and our families to prepare for our futures."

Under Walter Dawkins, project director, the volunteers are being trained in automotive repair, food preparation, upholstery and sewing. The instructors come from among the poor themselves. When the training program is completed, the participants will be ready to take jobs.

During training the men and women continue to receive regular welfare checks, in addition to a small monthly payment.

Blazer trainees are dedicated to the principal of trying to get a job rather than remaining on welfare.

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Careful consideration of priorities will make sure the war on poverty is fought with weapons that provide greatest impact on the causes of poverty. High priority should be given programs where educational and occupational skills of the poor are increased. I hope state government can expand its Rural Youth Development Program and that more opportunities will be open locally to the poor in literacy and manpower training programs.

By emphasizing skill enhancement, we can prepare the poor for jobs and assure them of improved opportunities during their working lives.

I urge Community Action Agencies to apply the test of necessity to every proposal. Greater effectiveness will require increased and improved use of available education, employment, health and housing programs funded under companion legislation.

MARCH, 1966 — Vol. 1, No. 1

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

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